



# Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MARCH 12, 2009  
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## **MAN SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS WITHOUT PAROLE**

MOBILE, Ala. - Robert Nell "Ponda" Daniels, 32, of Bay Minette, Alabama, was sentenced in federal court today to 20 years without parole for his participation in a drug distribution scheme affecting both Mobile and Baldwin Counties. Daniels pled guilty to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute crack cocaine in July of 2008. At the sentencing hearing today, Daniels claimed he was involved with less crack cocaine than was reflecting in court documents. Baldwin County Sheriff's Investigator Andre Reid, Jr., testified to statements Daniels made immediately after he was arrested. Daniels admitted receiving crack cocaine from several sources of supply in Mobile and Baldwin County. Daniels also admitted that he was receiving cocaine powder from a supplier in Mississippi which he converted into crack cocaine for distribution in Baldwin County. United States District Court Judge William Steele found that Daniels was accountable for 2.6 kilograms (almost 6 pounds) of crack cocaine at the conclusion of the testimony.

Assistant United States Attorney Gloria Bedwell filed an information alleging that Daniels had two prior state court convictions for drug distribution, which invokes a more substantial penalty. Because the evidence showed Daniels distributed such a large quantity of crack cocaine, he faced mandatory life sentence. At the hearing, Ms. Bedwell also asked the judge to take into account Daniels' immediate cooperation with authorities following his arrest, as a result of which two of Daniels' suppliers were arrested and charged in federal court. She told the judge in a written pleading that a departure from the mandatory life sentence down to 30 years imprisonment was appropriate in light of Daniels' cooperation. Judge Steele disagreed with Ms. Bedwell's recommended sentence of 30 years, and found instead at a sentence of 20 years was reasonable in light of all the circumstances of the case. He also ordered that Daniels serve a term of supervised release of 10 years following his release from custody and that Daniels would forfeit \$1,000 in drug proceeds which was seized from him at the time of his arrest.

The case was investigated by the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office and the Baldwin County Drug Task Force.